

BOGGY-GLADE TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLAN

COMMENT INFORMATION

June, 2011

DOLORES PUBLIC LANDS OFFICE



The Forest Service has been discussing roads and trails in the Boggy-Glade Travel Management Area. This area, which encompasses lands north of Dolores to the Forest Service boundary, contains many miles of roads and trails. Our efforts have focused on which roads and trails can provide the best overall motorized access and be reasonably maintained over time. A previous decision for this area (Modified Alternative B) was returned to this office requiring additional analysis. Details about Modified Alternative B start on page 3 of this document.

In an effort to more fully involve our communities, I am **initiating a 30-day comment period on the Boggy-Glade Travel Management Plan Environmental Assessment beginning June 20, 2011 and ending July 20th**. The Forest Service is very interested in providing *all of the members of our community* the opportunity to get involved in this process and provide information to the process. We are seeking comments on Modified Alternative B as a new starting point for public dialogue.

In an effort to focus the analysis and facilitate the best use of public comments, the Forest Service is asking for specific input, such as;

- What routes are most important for your favorite forest uses such as wood cutting, camping, hunting, driving, or recreational access?
- Since we aren't going to keep all the routes, which areas or routes are most important and why?
- What routes are redundant to your needs, or should not be used by vehicles?
- Should mechanized equipment such as mountain bikes use only designated roads and trails?

As described in the enclosed material, Modified Alternative B is very similar to the previous edition with a few adjustments. One adjustment is a proposal to amend the Forest Plan for the Boggy-Glade area, and the other is to manage mechanized equipment such as mountain bikes on the designated road and trail system.

HOW TO OFFER INPUT

There will be several ways that community members can provide input:

'Open Houses' – We hope to provide the opportunity for community members to get information about the project and discuss it with Forest Service staff. There will be large-scale maps that will include the Boggy Draw area, Salter Y area, Black Snag/Big Water area, Dolores Canyon rim, Glade Mountain, McPhee Lake and Cottonwood areas so that important routes,



camping and parking areas can be identified and discussed with staff experts in hydrology, range, biology, recreation and engineering. In addition, maps of proposed routes to be re-vegetated will be available.

Open House	Wed, June 22	Cortez High School, anytime from 5 pm-8 pm
Open House	Thurs, June 23	Dove Creek High School, anytime from 5 pm-8 pm

The open house is informal, walk in anytime between 5 and 8 to participate. After reviewing the information the public may write comment letters or attend the following week's formal public hearings to submit brief oral comments.

'Public Hearing' – The week following the open houses, there will be two formal public hearings where people will be provided a 2-3 minute time period to record their comments at the hearing. Please sign in between 6:30 and 7:00pm. The hearing will begin promptly at 7pm and will conclude at 9pm.

Hearing	Tues, June 28	Montezuma-Cortez High School, 7-9 pm
Hearing	Wed, June 29	Dove Creek High School, 7-9 pm

'Written comment' to the Forest Service - You are encouraged to write a letter of comment and letters will be accepted during the 30-day comment period. Comments are most helpful if they focus on concerns about Modified Alternative B in the Boggy-Glade area. Comments about the entire Environmental Assessment, including all of the Alternatives, are also welcome during this 30-day timeframe. If you wrote a comment letter previously it will be considered in the final decision. You may also comment again.

'Community presentations' can be requested. Forest Service can be invited to your organized community or civic group for a short presentation on the Boggy Glade proposal. Contact us @ 882-6822.

DETAILS ABOUT THE FORMAL COMMENT PERIOD

The Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Boggy-Glade Travel Management Plan (May 2010) is available upon request at the Dolores Public Lands Office, 29211 Hwy 184, Dolores, Colorado, 81323 or by calling 970-882-7296. The EA is also available at the San Juan National Forest website at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/sanjuan/projects>

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comment submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered, however, those who only submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision.

Per our appeal regulations, 36CFR215, comments must be filed within the formal 30-day comment period which begins with publication of a legal notice in the Durango Herald. The Durango Herald is the newspaper of record for the appeal timeframes, however, public service announcements will also be provided to local media.

Written comments must be submitted to: Connie Clementson, at the Dolores Public Lands Office (address above). The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are 8 am – 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Comments may also be faxed to Attn: Connie Clementson at 970-882-6841. Oral comments may be provided at the Dolores Public Lands office during normal business hours via telephone or in person. Please inform the front desk staff you wish to provide oral comments. Oral comments may also be provided at the public hearings.

Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), and Word (.doc) to comments-rocky-mountain-san-juan-mancos-dolores@fs.fed.us. In cases where no identifiable name is attached to an electronic message, a verification of identity will be required for appeal eligibility. A scanned signature is one way to provide verification. For electronically mailed comments the sender should normally receive an automated acknowledgement from the agency as a confirmation of receipt. If the sender does not receive an automated acknowledgement receipt of comments, it is the senders responsibility to insure timely receipt by other means (36 C.F.R. 215.6 (4) (iii)).

FUTURE STEPS

No final decision has been made. After consideration of public comments Modified Alternative B will be adjusted and a new decision will be made. The deciding officer will be the District Ranger.

The deciding official is required to consider the long term health and productivity of the land, direction from the Forest Plan, public opinion and other laws and regulations. Commenting is not a voting process but plays an important role in understanding the balance between long term health of the land and the demands for various land uses.

APPEAL OPPORTUNITIES

The appeal process happens after the final decision is made but in order to participate in the appeal process you must comment during the 30-day comment period. If you wrote a letter during our previous comment period then you will continue to have standing to appeal. The appeal process allows citizens to raise concerns about the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) and is not the venue for only expressing concerns about the project. Concerns about the project should be raised prior to the final decision if at all possible.

DESCRIPTION OF MODIFIED ALTERNATIVE B

The attached map shows the roads that would be open to general public motorized use under Modified Alternative B. The map also shows yellow areas for seasonal times in winter wildlife habitat areas, and purple areas for wet weather motorized seasonal restrictions to protect the road surface. Additional roads may be closed in wet weather to protect the road surface. The locations of gates will be displayed on maps at the open house.

This map and alternative description (below) is the same actions that were shown in the August 2010 decision that was reversed, with two additions.

1. Modified Alternative B may require an amendment to the Forest Plan specific to the Boggy-Glade area.

2. It is proposed that mechanized equipment like mountain bikes use the designated road and trail system.

KEY POINTS

There would be 427 miles of motorized routes open to the general public in Modified Alternative B which includes 359 miles of roads and 68 miles of OHV trail.

A variety of old skid trails, temporary logging routes, user-created two tracks and old fence lines that criss-cross the areas between the numbered Forest Service roads would no longer be used for motorized access. It is this very network of routes that were never engineered for long term use that are now causing loss of a productive, healthy forest.

Motorized game retrieval with an ATV or vehicle off of the designated open roads would not be allowed. However, in many parts of the Boggy-Glade area, the farthest a person would have to walk to retrieve game is ½ mile. A map showing a ½ mile width along the open roads will be available at the open houses.

MODIFIED ALTERNATIVE B

The following actions would take place if Modified Alternative B is selected --

Open Motorized Travel

- All types of over-the-ground wheeled or tracked motorized travel would be restricted to a designated system of roads and trails as part of the public lands transportation system shown on the *Modified Alternative B* Map (attached). All summer over-the-ground cross country travel with a wheeled or tracked motorized vehicle would be prohibited. Over-snow travel is not changed except in the winter wildlife areas discussed below.
- Approximately 359 miles of Forest system roads would be open for public driving in the summer months (see Map).
- In addition, all open forest roads are available for OHV driving except the Dolores-Norwood Road (16.23 miles).
- Approximately 68 miles of OHV trail would be available. This includes the 45 mile Glade OHV loop, a portion of FR532A (1.78 miles) which will be a Level 1 road that is open for OHV use named the Cottonwood Connector OHV Trail, and the existing Boggy Lookout and Boggy OHV trails. OHV trails are designed for ATVs less than 50-inch width.
- Off-road vehicles greater than 50 inches such as UTVs are not allowed on the 50-inch trails but would use any open Forest road except the Dolores-Norwood Road.
- Informational and regulatory signing would be posted.

- Modified Alternative B applies to the general public use only. Cross-country travel and/or use of administrative roads or temporary roads are allowed for permitted activities, administrative use, emergency access and other authorized uses including access to private land in-holdings. Modified Alternative B would serve as a reference when developing projects and issuing permits.
- Approximately **77 miles** of Level 1 **Administrative Use Only** roads will be maintained. This includes converting **35** miles of previously open Level 2 road to administrative use only roads.

Restoring Bare Ground to Vegetation (Road Decommissioning)

- Decommission approximately **93** miles of miles of Level 1 administrative use only roads.
- Decommission approximately **62** miles of Level 2 un-graveled, high-clearance roads.
- Any non-system route (two-track, old logging route, etc.) not shown as open on the enclosed map would be unavailable for public driving. Some of these routes could receive decommissioning actions to help re-vegetate the roadbed, discourage illegal use, or correct sedimentation. Miles of nonsystem roads are not calculated because they are not accurately inventoried. Maps will be shown at the open houses.
- There are no proposals to decommission any Level 3, 4, or 5 roads, which passenger cars/trucks utilize. These main roads with graveled surfaces remain the same under Modified Alternative B, except for a portion of the road just below the Benchmark Lookout tower which will be gated.
- Decommissioning could mean blocking the entrance and allowing a route to naturally re-vegetate, or scarifying, seeding or recontouring to promote seed growth and restore drainage patterns. Routes will be evaluated to determine the technique needed to achieve the goal of re-vegetation.
- When selecting sites for physical barriers, utilize natural features such as steep terrain, rock outcroppings, trees and/or fence lines. The most logical closure point may not be at the entrance of a road but a short distance from the intersection.

Administrative Use

- **35 miles** of Level 2 roads would be gated or physically restricted and available for administrative use only or access by foot or horseback. No route signing and minimal maintenance of these routes would occur.

Seasonal Closures (Wildlife and Road Protections)

- Travel on the open roads with wheeled or tracked motorized vehicles, including snowmachines, would be prohibited from 12/1 thru 5/1 for winter wildlife habitat as shown on the **Modified Alternative B** Map in the Lake McPhee and Thomas/Glade

Mountain areas. Roads in these areas would be open from 5/2 to 11/30 (summer and fall).

- Travel on the open roads with wheeled or tracked motorized vehicles, but not including snowmachines, would be prohibited from 12/1 thru 5/1 for wet weather road issues as shown on the ***Modified Alternative B*** Map in the Boggy Draw to Cottonwood Road areas. Dates of this closure are dependent on weather conditions. Other roads may also be closed during wet weather to protect the road surface.

Trails for Hiking, Mountain Biking and Horse Riding

- Trails would be established in the Sage Hen area and the House Creek connector (see map). The Sage Hen, Little Bean and House Creek connector trails would be closed to hiking, horseback, and cross-country skiing from 12/1 thru 3/1 for winter wildlife protection.
- There is no change from the previous Boggy Draw Trail decision so hiking/horseback/mountain bike trails in Boggy Draw remain the same.

Mechanized Travel

- Mountain bike riding would be provided on the open road and trail system shown on the attached Modified Alternative B map. This includes riding opportunities on 427 miles of forest roads and OHV trails, plus 55 miles of nonmotorized trails. Cross-country travel by mountain bike would be prohibited.

Game Retrieval

- Motorized game retrieval with an ATV or vehicle off of the designated open roads would not be allowed. Hiker, horseback and game cart retrieval would be allowed.
- Dolores Public Lands Office will solicit outfitter and guides and other vendors to provide services for non-motorized game retrieval or to assist hunters with their own retrieval methods such as renting game carts or horses.

Dispersed Camping

- Off road motorized travel for dispersed camping would be allowed 300 feet from the centerline of designated system roads, on each side of the road, provided no resource damage occurs.
- As implementation crews find popular dispersed camping sites, they would place road barriers in a manner that provides continued access to the dispersed camping site.
- Facilities may be added to Ferris Campground within the existing footprint of the campground to encourage use by horse groups.

- The following areas will be closed to dispersed camping:
 - 300 feet either side of the FS Road 528 (House Creek Road) from its intersection with FS Road 526 (Dolores-Norwood Road) to House Creek Campground to facilitate use of the campground
 - Glade Guard Station Administrative Site within the fenced area.
 - Benchmark Lookout Administrative Site and along FR493 beyond the closure gate in the SE corner of Section 2 to the lookout. The short non-system route to a reclaimed well-pad will be designated a Level 2 road and used as a parking area.
 - Glade Lake, Ferris, Cabin, Dry Lake, and Beef Trail wetland enclosures within the fenced areas
 - Lone Dome Road outside of established campgrounds to facilitate use of Ferris, Cabin and Bradfield Campgrounds
 - Rotary Park immediately adjacent to and across the Dolores River from Joe Rowell Park in Dolores
 - Roads in the Lake McPhee Recreation complex and House Creek Campground area
 - Sage Hen remains a day use only area based on a closure order signed on August 18, 2006 and as such is closed to dispersed camping.
 - All existing and future trailheads and day-use areas would be closed to dispersed camping. This includes Boggy Draw Trailhead, existing and new Cottonwood Road Trailheads, and the new Glade OHV North and South Trailheads.

Dolores-Norwood Road

- Jurisdiction of the Dolores-Norwood Road would be recommended for transfer to Montezuma and Dolores Counties upon review and approval by the County Commissioners of Dolores and Montezuma Counties. Current management would remain until this transfer occurs.

Parking

- A parking area will be constructed on the corner of Cottonwood Road and West Dolores Road for all season use.
- Parking for Day Use off of a designated motorized road or trail would be allowed within one vehicle length from the edge of the road or trail surface when such use does not create unsafe conditions and does not cause damage to resources and facilities.

Terminology

Below is some terminology for Modified Alternative B. These same terms are also used in the Environmental Assessment.

Forest Service Road Maintenance Levels include Levels 1-5 roads; Level 5 (paved), Level 4 (suitable for passenger car travel and provide comfort at moderate speeds), Level 3 (suitable for passenger car travel), Level 2 (suitable for high clearance vehicles), and Level 1 (closed roads – administrative use only). Many factors are considered when designing a road including resource conditions, volume of traffic and type of vehicle to accommodate. For the Boggy-Glade Travel Management Plan area, Level 1 and 2 roads are usually native surface and Level 3 and 4 roads are usually surfaced with material including gravel. Level 3 and 4 roads are usually wider to allow for passing and have greater site distances than Level 1 and 2 roads. Level 5 roads are the paved portions of Dolores-Norwood, Lake McPhee Recreation Complex and House Creek area roads.

‘Non-System’ Routes refer to any unplanned road, abandoned travelway, or off-road vehicle tracks that have not been designated and managed as a road by the Forest Service. They are also considered routes that were once under permit, once on the official system, or were under another type of authorization and were not re-vegetated upon the termination of the authorization. Synonyms include unauthorized road or route, user-created road, user-created route, or way. ‘System’ roads are those routes that have been identified as part of the approved transportation system that the Forest Service will sign, maintain and encourage public use.

Decommission is a process of discontinuing the current use of a route (road or trail) and returning the roadbed to a vegetated state. Some routes may re-vegetate themselves over the long term once use ceases. This can be sometimes be achieved by signing; other times blocking the entrance with physical barriers such as a gate or scattering of debris. In those areas that the above methods are not effective, soil berms, seeding only, creating water bars, removing fills and culverts and re-establishing drainage-ways or re-contouring may be necessary.

Administrative Use Only (Closed Roads) means a road has been placed in intermittent service (Level 1) and is closed to unrestricted vehicular traffic. The road may be closed by a gate, sign, and/or other physical barrier. Level 1 roads are usually used for timber harvest, prescribed burning, fire suppression, communication sites, pipelines, drill sites or livestock facility maintenance. Maintaining closed roads in an area shows an anticipated need for continuing resource management. Level 1 roads are normally not open for public use. Other administrative use roads are used for access to private in-holdings.

Temporary roads are created at the time of a management activity and re-vegetated after use. Temporary roads are not tracked on GIS maps and usually only exist for the life of a project such as a timber sale or other permitted activity. Some non-system roads may be given temporary road status, used for permitted or contracted activity, and then re-vegetated by the permittee or contractor.